

Weekly Bureau of Information for All Who Till the Soil or Are Interested in Making Homes

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT

All inquiries and communications addressed to The Times-Dispatch will receive prompt attention. This department will appear each Monday, and contributions or suggestions will be welcomed.

THE IVY DEPOT FARMER REPLIES TO HIS CRITICS

DISEASES Middle Men and High Prices, and Insists Half-Truths Won't Reconcile Contradictions.

To the Editor Agricultural Department:

When I wrote you, touching some of the perplexing things being said to the farmer, I did not expect to be honored by editorial criticism. Please accept thanks.

I would like to say that I think your editor's article, just published, did not make clear the points I meant to make, or at least seems to charge me with at least one meaning that was not in my mind at all. I did not mean, nor say, that it is not wise to adopt better agricultural methods, and increase production, but tried to point out the apparent contradiction in doing so, however, they were only short time ago, they were caught was ruin, and to fight at the weakness of supposing that more products to the acre alone can operate materially to reduce the cost of living. Unless accompanied by a general reduction and readjustment of business, the effect it seems to me would be mainly in the prices of farm products, and not in the cost of what we eat, and what we drink, and what we shelter, and amuse and generally pleasure ourselves. Ultimately it would be distributed among all of us, but the process would be slow and painful.

Your critic overlooks my reference to the fact that the producer gets only a portion of the price which the consumer pays, while the middlemen get the other two-thirds. Some of these intermediate dealers and handlers of various kinds can be eliminated by being turned into workers and producers. Instead of mere credit-takers it might not reduce the cost of living much, but it would help us to raise money to pay the cost agricultural and others also, perhaps, to the extent mentioned. They want too many "conveniences" and insist upon letting others to do too many things which our fathers had to do for themselves.

No doubt our increased population has been one cause of increased cost of living, but it has not been the sole cause as your critic seems to think. Increased numbers of workers would one way or another bring increased supplies as well as increased consumption. If it were only for themselves, it had seemed in justice,

there might be something in your critics' apparent notion that there ought to be more farmers as well as more bushels to the acre, but high prices pervade all kinds of ware, and not of us farmers did competition quite strenuously enough already.

And still, to look to my first complaint that the farmer should not be sold merely half-truths, and be expected to reconcile contradictions,

one breath, be told that he must double his products, and thereby reduce the cost of living, and in the next, that if he does he will be guilty of disastrous overproduction.

"Truth dwells in the middle after all."

FARMER
Ivy Depot, May 5.

COUNTRY PASTORS AND FARM DEMONSTRATION

T. O. Sandy, of Burkberville, the State demonstration work in Virginia, is very properly seeking the aid and co-operation of the ministers of the State, especially the pastors of the churches in the rural districts. It seems to have a little talk with the preachers that fills the columns of the Industrial Section, said Mr. Sandy to the industrial editor. He was told that The Times-Dispatch loved the idea of the country work, and so could proceed. He spoke as follows: "The United States Department of Agriculture, the agricultural colleges of the country, and the various counties in the State are co-operating in an endeavor to carry the principles of scientific agriculture to the farmers in their communities, you know, is the farmers' co-operative demonstration work. The ultimate result of this demonstration work in Virginia is the financial, moral and spiritual uplift of the people in the country, and to this end, we are asking the co-operation of the preachers and pastors."

The minister of greatest assistance in the development of the character of the State: First, by assisting in the removal of the prejudices against the scientific agricultural methods, and second, by impressing on the farmers that science is knowledge intelligently digested and arranged, and that scientific agriculture is a practical theory, but something that has been proved and demonstrated to be profitable time and again, beyond all question.

"Second, By assisting in disseminating agricultural information. It is our purpose from time to time to furnish country papers, bulletins, circulars and letters, giving the latest news on agricultural problems and conditions."

"They can tell the attention of people to the sources from which they can obtain information. They can read at different meetings, it should seem wise to them, the short circulars and letters that call for promotion in the part of the farmers."

"Third, We are asking the ministers, by co-operating with us in the holding of institutes and farmers' meetings of all kinds, to help the cause."

"Some of these meetings will give out notices as to the time and place these meetings are to be held, and urge the farmers and their families to attend, so they can attend these meetings, and then, if they are interested, or suggest some suitable person to speak."

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